

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

January 15, 2013

The Clean Water, Clean Beaches Initiative is the largest protest hearing process that Los Angeles County has ever undertaken. It should have been as convenient, transparent and open as possible, but unfortunately it did not live up to that. We continue to receive significant correspondence from the public who do not understand the need for the fee, and some have questioned the credibility of the way the process has been conducted.

We mailed a very important protest hearing notice that looks like junk mail to the public during the busiest mail season of the year, and we are still being told that many never received a notice or that it was inadvertently thrown away. Additionally we were recently informed that an online or email protest was an option for us to use during these proceedings. This type of process should have been made open to the public from the beginning to ensure that it was as convenient as possible.

Throughout this protest process we've heard from homeowners, businesses, school districts, cities, churches, non-profits, chambers, and even environmental groups that have requested the process be given more time so their issues can be addressed.

Many property owners and businesses are concerned that they are already required to do the things the parcel fee is meant to achieve – such as capturing storm water and installing permeable pavement – so this will be a double tax for them. Others want to see a specific project list to know where the money will be going.

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Finally, we are also asking schools, churches and non-profits, the organizations that have struggled the most in this tough economy, to divert funds from their programs to pay this fee. Most of these groups have no idea where these funds will come from. We need to take a step back, give everyone a chance to be heard and figure out a path forward which is fair, equitable and achieves our shared goal – clean water and beaches in Los Angeles County.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors continue the Protest Process and Public Hearing for the Clean Water, Clean Beaches Initiative for an additional 90 days; and direct the Department of Public Works to address and report back on the following issues:

1. Immediately provide an online/email protest option to the public;
2. Provide a process for placing this initiative on a General Election Ballot, if there is no majority protest;
3. Determine a possible sunset date for this initiative;
4. Define a specific list of projects that this initiative would fund;
5. Address the concern of double taxation for those that are already capturing and treating stormwater; and
6. Develop potential alternative mechanisms to fund stormwater quality projects.

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